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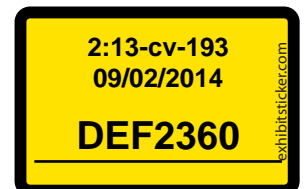
The Honorable Eric Holder, Attorney General of the United States
950 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Attorney General Eric Holder,

I read online at www.Foxnews.com (page attached) about the Voter ID Law controversy here in Texas. The news page shows that the decision being made about the law has been brought to court and the "Lawyers for the state of Texas argued Friday (July 13, 2012) that a contentious voter ID law should go forward because it doesn't limit minorities' right to vote." Studies do not necessarily support the idea that fewer minorities have photo IDs than whites. In fact some studies suggest that minorities have more IDs than whites. But, your Justice Department attorneys are against having the Voter's ID law go forward, saying that this law "is exactly the type of statute that the act (Voting Rights Act), passed in 1965, was designed to prevent." The Fox News page also says that a decision has not been made yet by the judges and "the presiding judge, Rosemary Collyer, said they would try to have a decision in "quick order" and they hope to make a decision before November's elections." Attorney John Hughes argued for Texas, that "the state had met its burden, showing through expert witnesses, social science studies and its own dissection of the Justice Department's evidence that there was little cause to believe any eligible voter would be unable to vote because of the ID law." He also tells judges "that public opinion backs voter ID laws," and that "other states that have passed ID laws have not seen a drop in turnout. People who want to vote already have ID or an ability to get it." Yet, one of the attorneys of the Justice Department, Gerald Hebert said, "the law would hurt the poor" for one of his closing arguments on Friday.

The basic argument against voter ID is that it will disenfranchise minority voters, because minority voters tend to be the poorest and due to this many minority voters do not have photo identification because they cannot afford them or are unable to travel to get them. This entire argument is absurd. In many states, a valid photo ID is required in order to apply for welfare. The government enacts social welfare programs that are intended for the poorest citizens yet they are required to establish identity before receiving the benefits.

In my opinion, the Texas Voter ID law should go forward. I agree with the lawyers for the state of Texas and the Attorney General John Hughes about the law not hurting anyone's chance to vote, and it does not hurt the poor. I think that trying to stop the law where people will not have to show their photo IDs to be able to vote is a mistake. It is better to have that law so no one will commit voter fraud. If the law does not go through then people who are not registered voters can use other people's identities to vote. For example, they may take the identity of someone who is dead and make it their own. This would also make it easier for someone to vote more than once, since they could not be identified. I believe that could cause unfair elections.



No matter what a person's income or race, today it is virtually impossible to get by without an official photo ID card. People have to have photo IDs to be able to do certain things, get certain items, or to travel. There are a lot of things for which people have to show their photo IDs. You need an ID to get a P. O. Box, open bank accounts, cash checks, rent cars and to do almost anything involving a money exchange or purchase. Photo IDs are a very common way to prove identity in many situations. Some prescriptions require a photo ID to be picked up. People also need a photo ID to be able to get on a plane, or drive a car. You need photo identification to be able to get a job. Bankers need your Identification to help you set up your bank accounts. A photo ID is also needed in order for people to join some shopping clubs and buy things like tobacco products, or alcohol. People need to have their photo IDs when getting a marriage license. When people are renting an apartment they need to show their photo ID. Also, many doctors' offices make photo IDs of people when they become patients and hospitals take photo IDs at admission. People also need to have their photo IDs so they will be able to buy a gun, as well as being able to purchase hunting or fishing licenses.

In fact, I recently had to show my own photo ID in order to purchase a fishing license. I went to Academy Sports and Outdoors in Port Arthur, TX and was amazed to learn that not only did they need to see my photo ID, but also my social security number just to sell a fishing license to me so I can legally catch a fish in Texas. However, your Justice Department doesn't think we need photo ID to be able to do one of the most important duties of a citizen. So, I do not understand why people want to stop the Voter's ID law from going forward when the photo ID is needed for so many other things that are not nearly as important as voting.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my opinion on what I think should happen with the Voter's ID law here in Texas.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Hotchkiss".

Emily Hotchkiss

Texas: State voter ID law does not discriminate

Published July 13, 2012 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Lawyers for the state of Texas argued Friday that a contentious voter ID law should go forward because it doesn't limit minorities' right to vote and, therefore, does not violate the federal Voting Rights Act.

Justice Department attorneys argued just the opposite, saying the law requiring voters to show valid, government-issued photo identification at the polls is exactly the type of statute that the act, passed in 1965, was designed to prevent.

Both sides gave closing arguments Friday after a weeklong trial about the Texas law, passed last year by the state's Republican-controlled Legislature. Texas currently only requires voters to show their voter registration cards, which do not have photos, or another acceptable alternative form of ID such as a driver's license or utility bill.

Texas' voter ID law is similar to laws passed by GOP-controlled legislatures in Georgia and Indiana.

The Justice Department blocked the Texas law in March, citing the Voting Rights Act. Texas sued the Justice Department, sending the case to federal court in Washington. A three-judge panel is set to decide the fate of the law.

It's not clear when the judges will make a ruling. The presiding judge, Rosemary Collyer, said they would try to have a decision in "quick order." The judges have said they would like to rule before November's elections.

Attorney John Hughes, who argued for Texas, said the state had met its burden, showing through expert witnesses, social science studies and its own dissection of the Justice Department's evidence that there was little cause to believe any eligible voter would be unable to vote because of the ID law.

"People who want to vote already have ID or an ability to get it," Hughes said.

He said if the Justice Department's argument that thousands would be disenfranchised by the Texas law were valid, the courtroom would have been full of witnesses testifying in support of that point.

Hughes also reiterated other arguments Texas had made throughout the week: that public opinion backs voter ID laws, that Texas lawmakers had the integrity of votes — not the suppression of minority voters on their mind — when they passed the law, and that other states that have passed ID laws have not seen a drop in turnout.

The three judges hearing the case seemed skeptical of Hughes' arguments, interrupting him repeatedly with questions. Judge Robert Wilkins asked Hughes how Texas could require some rural voters to drive more than 100 miles to get a new voter ID card when under current law a person cannot be required to travel more than 100 miles for a subpoena.

Matthew Colangelo, in the Justice Department's closing argument, said Texas' law should be thrown out under the Voting Rights Act because of a number of factors, including the atmosphere in which the law was passed, statistical evidence about its effects and the fact that it creates new barriers to voting.

"It's exactly the kind of law Congress had in mind when it passed the Voting Rights Act in 1965," he said of the act, which was passed as a safeguard on minority voting rights.

Colangelo noted that the ID law in Texas was passed against a backdrop of "tremendous population growth" in the state's Hispanic community. Texas added 4 million people to its population between

2000 and 2010, he said, and 90 percent of them were Hispanics.

"Texas has acted to take away Latino voting strength as it's on the verge of growing" he said.

Colangelo cited testimony that Democrats in the Texas Legislature gave earlier in the week. They said normal rules were suspended to speed along the voter ID bill.

He also argued that the law simply made it more difficult for people to vote, calling it "a new barrier that will disenfranchise."

The judges also interrupted Colangelo at times during his closing argument, pressing him to clarify his points. But they didn't ask him as many questions as they did Hughes.

Closing arguments also came Friday from lawyers for several intervening groups who have joined the Justice Department in opposition to Texas' law. One of the attorneys, Gerald Hebert, said the law would hurt the poor. He referred to it as "merely a pretext, a cloak for voter suppression."

"It will harm the poor, the downtrodden, the destitute," he said. "How mean-spirited, how callous can you be?"